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601 193 Grammatically speaking, most of the Thonga terms of kinship belong to the class mu-ba, the personal class. They form their plural in *ba* (batatana, bana, bamakwabu, batukulu). Some however are of the class yin-tin which comprises mostly animals, but also names of trades and of family relations : Ndjisana, nhondjwa, namu, nhombe, nhlantsa forming their plural in *ti*. The five following terms, Tatana, Mamana, Rarana, Malume, Kokwana, are treated as proper nouns when they are used as such. For instance when I say Tatana, it means *my* father, the one to whom this term applies par excellence. In this case Tatana is not preceeded by the initial vowel *a* or *e*, which is always prefixed to the common nouns (See Elementary Grammar ot the Thonga-Shangaan Language, page 26 § 65). If I wish to say "his father," I should say : Atatana wa kwe (Ro.), or Etata wa yena (Dj.) etc.

B. EXPLANATION OF THONGA TERMS OF RELATIONSHIP

602 Let us go deeper into the study of each of these terms, trying to ascertain their principal and derivative meanings. We shall consult the three genealogies here given, those of Tobane (A), of Mboza (B) and of his wife Nsabula (C), endeavouring to ascertain not only the social but also the moral relation existing between these several people. There are two kinds of relationship : blood relationship or consanguinity and marriage relationship, relationship on the wife's side or affinity. Amongst blood relatives, there are two categories which differ more from each other amongst the Bantus than amongst us, relatives on the father's side and on the mother's side. On the father's side, the relatives are called bakweru (Ro.), barikweru (Dj.), those of our home ; and on the mother's side, bakokwana, the ancestors.

We shall consider each of these three relationships separately, though it will be found impossible to isolate them entirely from each other. In each of them, we shall find two sets of terms : terms of correspondence and of reciprocity. We shall see also

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602 that these appellations are expressive of many different things, one of the main considerations dictating them being the right of a man to marry his wife's relatives, or to inherit the women belonging to his own family.

I. *Blood relationships.*

601 The general term to indicate this relationship is *bushaka* (from *shaka, mashaka*), relatives.

1) Relatives on the father's side.

(Bakweru : *ba*, those, *ku*, at, *eru* possessive pronoun of the first person plur. means those *with us*, in our home.)

Let us first consult Tobane, called Tobane II in the genealogy.

601 He calls Magugu his father, *tatana*. The relation implies
593 respect and even fear. The father, though he does not take much
611 trouble with his children, is nevertheless their instructor, the one who scolds and punishes. Absolute obedience is due to him on the part of his sons and daughters (App. V). So also in the case of the *father's brothers*, who are also called "batatana ba shirare :" the elder brother who is a "great father" to Tobane, and the younger
601 brother Nkale, "tatana lwe'ntjongo", a "little father." Their
611 wives, Matshini for instance, are mothers to him, though he can in certain cases marry them by inheritance. The cousins of the father are also fathers (Muhambi to Thakusa, for instance, Gen. B.), provided the father calls them brothers.

There is another term for father, *rara* in Djonga, *roro* in Ronga ; roro is only employed with the possessive pronoun in the three following forms : rorwa'nga, my father, rorwa'ku, your father, rorwa'bu, their father. The correlative of tatana is *ñwana*, son or daughter.

Tobane II calls Shitsimbo *kokwana*, grandfather, Tobane I kokwane wa tatana, grandfather of father, and Nkwangana kokwana wa kokwana, grandfather of grandfather. The expression

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601 potential wife of my father (Shaputa to Misaben), not to mention those women of my wife's family who can be so called. An elder sister is also mamana to her younger sister, and sometimes a husband calls his wife mamana (1).

If the mother's sister is a mother, the mother's brother is by no means a father. He is called *malume* or *kokwana*, and here we meet with one of the most characteristic features of the Thonga, and even Bantu, system of relationship. The term kokwana means first the paternal grandfather and all the ancestors on the father's side, and this is its proper essential meaning. The bakokwana are also all my mother's male relatives: her brothers, fathers, uncles, etc. They form a group which I call "ka bakokwana" which means "my mother's home," just as *kweru* means my father's home, my official home. Kweru comes first; ka bakokwana next. "The bushaka on the father's side is the head; on the mother's side, only the legs" (Mboza). 593 Let us remember that a child lives at his father's home and only 602 goes on a visit to his mother's village. He may stay there for 341 years after the weaning, but if he chose to settle there, he would be made fun of and severely censured by his father and his paternal uncles. "You are stupid," they would say, "you leave your own village, you go to the village of your bakokwana to increase it! This is true folly. Has not your mother been bought with money? The children she bore belong to your father, just like the calves of his cows." (Mboza.) But if the home of the mother cannot become the home of the children, the relations they maintain with

601 576 (1) The term mamana is frequently used by an interlocutor, without any idea of relationship, when speaking to married women of a more advanced age than himself. Such an extented meaning is also frequent with tatana, kokwana, ñwana. Any man older than I am can be addressed by me as tatana and will answer by calling me ñwana. If the difference of age is greater, we shall treat each other as kokwana and ntukulu. Speaking in the third person a child will always put tatana before the name of any grown up man, though he belong to a totally different clan. Women round Lourenco Marques often call a White man nkata, husband. This shows that kinship terms are employed as expressing moral relations as well as blood or family relations, and we must not draw hasty conclusions from the way in which these terms are applied, or necessarily see in them the traces of a previous social state in which every grown up man or woman was looked on as a true father or mother. The Thongas may give to these terms an extended meaning. Nevertheless they differentiate perfectly between their technical and their derived sense.

602 their bakokwana are of a much freer, more agreeable and kindlier
593 nature than those with their father's relatives..

Amongst the Thongas of the North the maternal grandfather and the maternal uncles are called indiscriminately kokwana. The Ronga dialect makes a distinction between kokwana, maternal grandfather, and malume, mother's brother; but the malume is often
601 called kokwana. In the Northern clans the *uterine nephews*, viz. the sons of my sister, are always called *ntukulu*, which is the term corresponding to kokwana, as we have seen; amongst the Ba-Ronga, they bear a special name, *mupsyana*, which seems to be becoming obsolete, being often replaced by ntukulu (1).

Let us consider these various relatives on the mother's side.
603 The maternal grandfather is the great, the true kokwana. He is respected for his age. He is however more lenient to his grandson by his daughter than to his grandson by his son. If the first damages anything, he will say: "That is no business of mine. Let the father of the child scold him, as he does harm to his property. I have nothing to do with their affairs. It is not my village." But if it were his grandson by his son, it would be a totally different matter, and he would be hard on him. However, should a child take too great a liberty with his kokwana, the old man will say to him: "Go and play with your malume."
604 The malume, indeed, for his uterine nephew, is quite different from any other relative. No respect at all is necessary towards him! "You go to *bombela* in his village; you do what you please. You take all the food you want without asking permission. If you are ill, he will take special care of you and will sacrifice for you" (Viguet). In the Ronga dialect this bombela is called *nyenyela*. When the mupsyana goes to his maternal uncle, accompanied by his comrades who scent a good meal, the wives of the malume call to him: "Come along, husband (nkata)! Look here, your malume has hidden some food in the back part of the hut (mfungwe), behind the large basket (ngula). Go and take it." The boy steals the food, runs away with it and eats it up to the last morsel

(1) This is one of many proofs that the Ronga clans have preserved some old customs better than their Northern compatriots. Their language also possesses certain archaic features which are wanting in the Northern dialects.

604 that I intend to treat it more fully later on in a special paragraph, when considering the traces of older forms of family life amongst the Thongas.

601 The true *malume* is the mother's full brother. But all her half brothers are also bamalume in the second degree ; so are also the brothers of the true malume.

605 What about the *children of the malume*, my cousins, or rather my 835 cross-cousins, sons and daughters of my mother's brothers, viz. 582 Shaputa and Marangen as opposed to Madonge and Misaben ? In Zulu, Sutho, Pedi there is a special term to indicate this relation, (mzala, motsoala, mudzwala, muzwala). And the main feature of the family system in those tribes is that a cousin has a prior right to marry the daughter of his maternal uncle, his mzala. Amongst the Thongas there is nothing of the kind. The special term does not exist except in the Maputju clan, at the Southern extremity of Thonga territory, where it is met with in the form of *ntale* (corresponding to mzala, according to the law of phonetic permutation) (1) or *shitale* (when preceded by the prefix shi).

605 But the right of marrying this cousin is not recognized in the 835 Thonga tribe. One can play with her, steal some object from 582 her in fun, but never take her as a wife. Such a breach of the custom would be punished by the chief. Later on, when the 602 special relation of cross-cousins has been more or less forgotten, marriage could take place between them, but, at any rate, the ceremony of dlaya shilongo (see p. 256) would be performed, in order to "kill" the previous relationship and to replace it by the new relation of husband and wife.

This being so, how do cross-cousins behave towards each other in the Thonga system ? As regards the daughter of their maternal uncle, the relationship is somewhat different for Misaben, a boy, and for Madonge, a girl. To Misaben the boy, Shaputa, his cousin, is mamana and she will call him son, ñwana, because, as we have seen, Shaputa is a potential wife for Mboza, father of Misaben, and Mboza calls her nkata, naati, namu. To Madonge,

605 (1) They also employ the cognate form *mzeali*, which is more akin to the Zulu regular term, and this tends to show that the Maputjus have borrowed this expression from their Zulu neighbours of Northern Amatongaland.

607 with the father of my wife, as these are her natural protectors.
835 In this first category is included the daughter of my wife's
595 brother (Shaputa versus Mboza). With her the relations are perhaps even more free than with my wife's younger sisters. I call her *nsati*. The intimacy is so great that I can hold her breasts (tamele mabele). I can do so even in the presence of my wife, who is her paternal aunt. She will be pleased to see that I am disposed to avail myself of my right to marry her, because her niece will thus become her nhlampsa, she will hlampsela rarana, i. e. become a second wife by the side of her father's sister. But I dare not take such a liberty with the girl if her father is on the spot and sees me. I probably do not possess the oxen to pay for her, and the father looks chiefly to the oxen.

As already pointed out, all the girls belonging to my bakoñwana are in the same position towards me. I can marry them all... if I am rich enough to "lobola" them. The grand-daughter of my wife's brother is a namu, a nsati. She will probably be a baby whilst I am a grown-up man. Never mind! If I meet her, a little girl on her mother's back, I go and take her in my arms, and
602 say to her: "Good morning, my wife!" As regards my wife's
607 cousins, those whose father is a brother of my wife's father and
835 who bear the same family name as my wife, they are also tinamu,
595 but here a distinction must be made. Should the father of one of these girls be younger than my wife's father, I can marry her; but should he be older I must not do so. Why is this? Because the girl, belonging to an elder branch of my wife's family, takes precedence of my wife; she is her "hosi", her chief. On the other hand my wife, being my first wife, is the mistress of the house; this cousin of hers ought therefore to obey her. But she is her chief! That would not be right. The natural family relations would be disturbed.. Such a union is not taboo (a psi yili) but it must be avoided.

835 The *second category of tinamu* includes those women whom I
595 might marry, not on account of the prior right of a group to the
607 women of another group, but because I might *inherit them*. They are the wives of my elder brothers. If their husbands die, I am their legal heir. Relations with them are easy. We joke together, but there is more reserve towards these tinamu than towards those

835 595 607 of the first category. Sexual intercourse with them is a great taboo, and a man daring to commit such a sin would be likened to a wizard: he has killed his brother. This is the sin called matlulana (App. VI). My younger brother's wives are not tinamu ; we call each other ñwingi. I do not inherit them except in extraordinary cases when the deceased has no brother younger than himself.

602 835 582 There is still a *third kind of bulamu*. I also call tinamu the cousins of my wife who are the daughters of my wife's mother's sisters. These girls do not belong to my wife's clan ; they bear the family name of their father. Therefore I have no right to inherit them : "A hi delani ndjaka," i. e. "we do not inherit from each other." The relations with these tinamu are agreeable, but there is no hope of marriage between us.

2) Relations on the Husband's side.

607 So far we have considered the relation of Mboza with his wife's family. But what about Nsabula and her position towards her husband's relatives ? Nsabula calls Masuluke and Nsengamuñwe *ñwingi*, and the term is reciprocal. It implies great respect. As we saw, the young bride must work a whole year for her mother-in-law. The same respect is shown by Nsabula to Djan, Sam, Fos, her husband's elder brothers. They are also *ñwingi* to each other. "Should I send her to call Djan," says Mboza, "she will kneel down before him and say : 'My father! Mboza calls you!' or : 'Ñwamasuluke (Masuluke's son), you are wanted with us." She will not dare to address him by name. This extraordinary respect is reciprocal. Djan will consider Nsabula as his inferior, but he will never play with her. On the other hand, Komatane, Mboza's younger brother, is only a *namu* to Nsabula. Both will joke together and even occasionally smear each other with ashes. So will Sam, Fos, Mboza and Komatane with Mihlakaza, the wife of their elder brother. Thus we note 607 this law : a woman will generally respect the elder brothers of her 835 husband (bengi), and hold very free intercourse with his younger 595 brothers (tinamu), and vice-versa. A man will keep away from

582 To the Northern clans this is not so repugnant: with them, it is a current saying that bukoñwana revives bushaka when bushaka has become weaker in the course of generations (1).

A third reason for these strong taboos, a reason which explains also why the prohibition is stronger on the father's side than on the mother's, is found in *the lobola custom*. Should a woman who is a relative on my father's side become my wife and should our union be put an end to by quarrels, I should go to her father to claim the lobolo. If her father happens to possess no oxen to return to me, he will have to go to his relatives to get them... He may have to come to my own father, who is his brother and belongs to the same family, a consequence which would be indeed absurd, because then I should myself pay the debt due to me!

On his wife's side, a man cannot marry the elder sister of his wife, who is mukoñwana to him, nor the daughters of his wife's sisters, who are *bana* to him, as we have seen.

II. *Marriages conditionally permitted.*

582 602 388 In some cases a marriage which ought not to take place may be allowed on condition that the whole family will perform the rite called *dlaya shilongo*. This is a most curious custom, and is found all through the tribe. I know of two cases in which it has been resorted to: a certain Mkili, of the Makaneta sub-clan (Nondwane) wished to marry Minsabula, his makwabu. Both had a common ancestor Muwayi. Muwayi had by a first wife a son called Basana, and by a second wife another son called Nsabula. Basana was the father of Mungobo, father of Mkili, and Nsabula

(1) It is also very much against the feeling of the tribe to confound *bukoñwana* and *bulamo*. A man named Filemon had married the daughter of a woman of dissolute habits, and the woman had given herself to a man who was the brother of Filemon's maternal grandmother. This man was therefore a malume for Filemon, and his wives were bulamo, even basati, possible wives for him, as he had the right to inherit them (p. 233). For this reason he said: "My wife's mother cannot marry that man, not only because of the Christian law which we have accepted, but also because of our own old customs. Why? Because she is my mother in-law, my mukoñwana, and by her marriage she would become my mama and I might inherit her. That is impossible."

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582 was the father of Minsabula. Mungobo and Nsabula were first
582 cousins or half first cousins (as their grandmothers, wives of
588 Muwayi, were different). Therefore Mkili was the first cousin once removed of Minsabula. Both were ba ka Makaneta. Another case was that of Michel, son of Gana and Ñwashiluvane, who married Djamela, daughter of Mankhelu, who was Ñwashiluvane's brother. Mankhelu was the malume of Michel and Djamela was his mamana, being the possible wife of Gana (See page 233). For a Thonga to marry her malume's daughter, *psa yila*, (See p. 234) whilst for a Pedi it is the proper thing. This is one of the great differences between the law of the two tribes. A Pedi has a real right of pre-emption on his *mudzwala*, whilst amongst the Thongas it is the father who possesses that right. (See later on G.) Possibly this Pedi custom encouraged Michel to entertain an idea which is repulsive to the Thonga mind. But the official *dlaya shilongo* took place in his case also.

I tried to discover in what other cases such a prohibited marriage was rendered possible by the performance of the rite, and found the following.

Conditional marriage is permissible with the daughter of my great-uncle, the younger brother of my grandfather ; and with the daughter of my grandfather by a wife other than my grandmother. Both are rarana. According to Mankhelu, it might also take place between himself and Shiluvane. This Shiluvane (who is not the chief Shiluvane, of course, but an entirely different person), is the daughter of the maternal great-uncle of Mankhelu, brother of Shidyele, who is his true grandfather, the father of his mother. Shiluvane is therefore the first cousin once removed of Mankhelu on his mother's side. She is a mamana.

But what is this rite of *dlaya shilongo* which has such power that it removes the taboo character of such marriages ? *Shilongo or mulongo* is an archaic word retained only in this expression and which corresponds to bushaka, blood relationship. This root exists also with that meaning in the Sutho word *seloko*. The relation by blood must be killed in order that the relation by marriage may be substituted for it.

Let us first see how this is done *in the Northern clans*.

it on the wife's head and say to her: "Go and bear children."

In the Ronga clans the *dlaya shilongo* is somewhat different. The bridegroom must first give £ 1 to the father; this is over and above the lobolo, of course. Both families provide a goat. These goats are killed without the assistance of the uterine nephews, in front of the hut of the girl's mother. The grandfather prays to the gods of the girl's father: "So be it! They have decided to marry each other; you, gods of the boy and the girl, unite them together so that they do not hate each other; let them not remind each other that they are brother and sister; let their union not be spoilt by such remembrances, nor by other people saying to them: "You have been guilty of witchcraft! You have married your relative!" By this prayer a general notification is given to everybody, and the feeling of shame is removed. Afterwards the officiating relative continues, exhorting the new wife, telling her all that she must do for her husband, mentioning all the details of her conjugal duties with such realism that she begins to cry. The bridegroom bows his head in shame. The preacher goes on till somebody puts a piece of meat into his mouth to stop the exhortation!

The whole country has gathered to see the proceedings and to eat the meat. The wedding pair do not partake of it, because *the goats have been sacrificed for them* (ba hahlela bone). The relatives go home, roasting on the way the joint of meat they have received so as to eat it before reaching their village.

The aim of the *dlaya shilongo* is lawfully to kill one kind of relationship and to replace it by another, because the two are not compatible. However, in the case of inheritance of a rarana, for instance, when a blood relative has to change his relationship and to become a relative by marriage, he can inherit without any rite being performed, if there is no nearer legal heir; in this case it is said: "Bushaka byi ta pfuka — the blood relationship will be revived." It will be strengthened by the new marriage relationship.

In the case of marriage with the great mukoñwana, this rite is also performed, as previously mentioned (p. 244). The wedding pair are also covered with the goat's skin. This goat is

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III. *Matriarchy.*

178 602 But as regards *mother-right* and the *uterine family*, I must confess that I have altered my views since writing Les Ba-Ronga, and would testify my gratitude to Mr. S. Hartland, who encouraged me to study this subject more attentively. I had not then gathered all the facts, and the identity of the *ntukulu* and the *mupsyana* only became clearly apparent to me when studying the Northern clans. Now, having inquired with special care into this most curious feature of the Thonga system, I have come to the conclusion that the most probable explanation is that, in former and very remote times, our tribe passed through the matriarchal stage. Let us carefully consider the relation of a malume with his uterine nephews, recapitulating all the facts.

1) Duties and rights of the maternal uncle.

604 591 As we have seen, the uterine nephew all through his career is the object of special care on the part of his uncle : if he is a first-born child, the malume prepares his ntehe. (See page 46.) When weaned, he goes to stay in the village of his mother's relatives for many years, a girl sometimes till she is grown up. 604 583 Later on, when she marries, the maternal uncle claims a right called *tjhumba*, £ 1, on the total amount of the lobolo. It is taboo to refuse it ; should a father dare to keep that £ 1, his brothers will say to him : "Do you not fear the gods ? The mother's gods will kill you! Your daughter will have no children. Did you alone bring her into the world ? Did not these people help you in bringing her forth ? And has not your wife grown with the assistance of those gods ? Her brother must be allowed to have his *tjhumba*" (Mboza).

585 604 On the day of the remittance of the lobolo, the maternal uncle and all the mother's relatives are invited to the feast, and for them a special part of the festal ox is reserved, called *ngimba*, viz. the

604 womb, the uterus ; this consists not only of that organ, but of the
585 whole belly, from the sternum to the hind legs ; the bride's mother eats the *mbata* and *khondjo*, viz. the extremity of the spine (Mboza).

585 On the day of hlomisa, when the bride is led to her husband's
431 village, her maternal relatives receive a special gift, a young cow called *mubya wa mana wa yena*, i. e. the skin in which her mother carried her on her shoulders when she was a baby. This cow will be sent to the family when the first and the third daughter marry. In the case of a second and fourth girl, the nyimba alone is sent.

585 In the *equipment of the bride*, the mother's relatives provide
604 her with a hoe, with fat to anoint her body, with a mat and clothing and sometimes with bracelets. The paternal aunt (hahana) does not give anything, neither does the paternal uncle, the latter only helping the father occasionally. Should the mother's relatives not fulfil this duty of providing part of the trousseau, next time they will not be given the *nyimba* to which they were entitled (Viguet).

593 But the most characteristic prerogative of the bamalume or
603 bakokwana, is *their special right of intercession* on behalf of the
604 uterine nephews. In fact, as Mankhelu said in his picturesque language, "as regards sacrifices (timhamba), the mother's relatives mostly perform them. They are the stem. My father is the stem as regards the oxen, but my mother is the true stem ; she is the god ; she makes me grow. Should she die when I am an infant, I shall not live. The village of my mother is as the home of the gods (ka mamana hi ko psikwembyen)." Simeon Gana added : "We have the special charge of sacrificing for our batukulu ; our sons also are priests to them, and can officiate in our place, even should they be younger than our batukulu. That is the reason why we do not marry them. We are their elders (bakulu)." Of course the bones will always be consulted and they will tell if a sacrifice must be offered to the gods of the mother or to those of the father, but a kokwane will preferably be called upon to sacrifice for a sick child. (See Part VI. Chap. II, II.)

604 In the ceremonies following death, especially in the feast of
611 the mourning beer (page 164), the malume will be the officiating person and squeeze the *psanyi* over his batukulu to cleanse them.

A last right possessed by the malume is that *of raising his village*

assagay. The batukulu dispose of the portion of the limbs offered to the gods. They *cut* the prayer and, at that moment they steal the meat or the beer of the sacrifice and run away with them. Why is this? "Because a ntukulu does not fear the saliva of his malume" (Mboza). They live in such intimacy with them that they can eat that which was reserved for the gods (1) (See p. 162).

The ntukulu *also takes precedence* in some other rites ; in the circumcision school the uterine nephew of the chief is at the head of the circumcised. In the *luma milomo* (page 146) he starts the purifying ceremony, and "gives to the others" (nyiketa) the use of the food of the deceased.

But it is especially in the question of the inheritance that he shows himself in his characteristic aspect. Father-right has set in and is strongly supported by the lobola custom. Therefore the sons of the deceased have the sole right to the property of their father, wives as well as implements. The batukulu, however, the uterine nephews, refuse to be left out! You will find them everywhere, trying to get something for themselves. They were already planning with the malume's wives to take them as spouses after the death of their husband. Remember how they teased the whole family, on the day of the distribution of the widows (page 208). When the implements were distributed, they came and claimed their *tjhumba* (a technical expression, it would seem, which means precisely this kind of claim lodged by a malume or a ntukulu). They were given the small assagay, the big one remaining for the son. In this way *ba nyiketa pfindla, they give over the inheritance to the legal heirs.* This is a most vivid representation of a right which no longer exists, having in fact become

(1) Some ethnographers have supposed that ancestral worship only began when the father took command of the family and consequently did not exist in the period of mother-right. This seems to me absolutely false. The spirits of the mother's family are invoked as well as the father's ancestors, and the special place of the uterine nephews in worship down to this day is best explained in this way: before the gods of the father were known and prayed to, those of the mother were worshipped, and consequently the batukulu held a special position in the ritual. When the ancestors on the father's side made their appearance in the Bantu Pantheon, beside those on the mother's side, or after the institution of father right, the batukulu preserved that special position.

604 obsolete, but which asserts itself in virtue of the survival of an old
178 custom. I have often been struck by the unconscious way in
428 which they act on all these occasions! They give the impression of people who have been hypnotised and ordered to do something next day, when no longer in the mesmeric sleep. You see them carrying out the act, constrained by a mysterious necessity and without knowing why they do so. The hypnotising factor here is the weight of heredity, of all this hoary antiquity, which belongs indeed to the past, but still influences the subliminal life of the tribe...

643 As regards the chiefs, I may add that the uterine nephew may
604 be given the chieftainship over a certain part of the country. He is well received at the Court, better than the nephews on the brother's side, because, with these, there is always the risk that they may become usurpers. This also explains why a chief, when in danger, will ask help from his bakokwana rather than from the relatives of his own family. The latter may seize the opportunity for "bangana buhosi", i. e. to dispute the chieftainship with him.

611 Mother-right most probably existed amongst the ancestors of
178 the Thongas, whatever may be the country in which they then lived
602 and the name by which they were called. But everything seems to prove that this phase has long ago passed away. No one remembers anything of the kind. Genealogies, which are the oldest records of the tribe, mention only the ancestors of the father. They are recalled much better than those of the mother. The lobola custom, which is the strongest support of the paternal right at the present time, has been practised since time immemorial (1). See also the special names of the great-grandfathers in the paternal line (p. 227).

000 (1) Lobola is however not incompatible with the uterine form of the family. I have been informed by the Rev. E. Allégret, working in the French Congo, that the Mpongwe and Galoa of the Lower Ogowe have still partly preserved the mother-right. But lobola exists. The first lobolo is payed indifferently to the father or the mother of the bride, and the choice is made according to the personal relations existing between the husband's family and the families of the bride's parents. When a second daughter marries, half the lobolo is given to the maternal uncle. The children stay in the father's village, but they are under the guidance of the mother and of her family. They belong to the mother's clan. This system evidently denotes a less advanced stage of evolution. However matriarchy is passing into patriarchy, and the lobola custom will probably hasten the process.

603 611 does not belong to him, and, whatever the child may do in this respect, the ease and indulgence which characterises his relations with his nephew will not be altered. Thus whatever influence the natural feelings of tenderness of the mother towards her children may have had on the special mode of behaviour of the batukulu towards their bakokwana, they are not the only factor, nor perhaps the most important factor to be considered: Property plays a greater part in the determination of that kind of relationship in the present circumstances, and as regards its first origin, the matriarchy hypothesis goes a long way to explain its characteristics.

602 611 178 But let me frankly recognise that the matriarchy theory is but a hypothesis. As Mr. Brown rightly shows, there is not a tribe amongst the Bantus, as far as we know, where that family system exists in its integrity, i. e. matrilineal, matrilocal, matripotestal. Everywhere there seems to prevail a mixture of the two systems. However if there has been an evolution (and an evolution has certainly taken place) and if one system preceded the other, it must certainly have been matriarchy, as its traces, in the present patriarchal system, bear all the character of relics of a former period.

000 I have tried to look far back into the past of the Thonga family system. Now I would ask: What about its future ? The question must be asked, because we are not considering the South African tribe only as a subject of scientific study. We are deeply interested in its welfare and in its destiny. New forces have appeared which act in a new way on primitive society.

What will be, what must be the nature of the evolution ? How must it be directed by those who have a responsibility for the shaping of the future Bantu society ?

We shall answer this question in our Practical Conclusions, at the end of this Volume. For the present we shall be satisfied with a scientific collection of the facts in relation to the two great customs which lie at the base of the whole family system of the Bantus : Lobola and Polygamy.

776 which there is no very clear explanation ; doubtless the matter did
769 not seem worthy of inquiry!

The two great categories of gods are *those of the family*, and *those of the country*, the latter being those of the reigning family. They do not differ as regards their nature. In national calamities those of the country are invoked, whilst, for purely family matters, those of the family are called upon.

769 Moreover, each family has two sets of gods, those *on the father's*
side and *those on the mother's*, those of "kweru" and those of
776 "bakokwana" (I. p. 268). They are equal in dignity. Both can
602 be invoked, and the divinatory bones are always called on to decide to which the offering must be made. It would seem, however, as if the gods of the mother's side were more tender-hearted and more popular than those of the father's. The reason for this is, perhaps, that relations are easier with the family of the mother than with that of the father. It is also just possible that it is a relic of the matriarchal period, when the ancestors of the mother alone were known, and consequently invoked. At any rate, the part played by batukulu nephews in the offerings shows that they are the true representatives of the gods, not of those of their father, but of their mother.

776 Two other categories of gods, which I have sometimes heard
769 mentioned, are the *Gods of assagais* (psikwembu psa matlhari)
766 and *the Gods of bitterness* (psa shibiti). The former are those who have been killed in battle ; the latter are those who have been drowned, killed by a wild beast, or who have committed suicide, or the pregnant woman who has been buried without being cut open (I. p. 166). In most of these cases, as is evident, the corpse has not been buried with the due rites and ceremonies ; the deceased has not been properly cared for : hence his bitterness ; or, as in the case of the pregnant woman, something has been buried without having first breathed its last breath (I. p. 140). In the case of the suicide, the poor man who hanged himself was full of sadness ; "The great bitterness is the rope", said Mboza. In most of these cases no one was present at the death! These gods are therefore angry, and are the most to be feared.

000 The *Gods of the Bush, Psikwembu psa Nhoba*, are also especially